

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4911

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0490

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, KN, BY

SUBJECT: BURUNDI ATTITUDES TOWARD KOREA

DURING LONG PRIVATE CONVERSATION JULY 6 WITH PRESIDENT MICOMBERO, I ASKED HIM WHY BURUNDI SO STRONGLY SUPPORTED NORTH KOREAN POSITION, WHEN IT WAS GOVERNED BY COMMUNIST REGIME AND WHEN HE HAD JUST AVOWED TO ME HIS DISTRUST OF COMMUNISTS. HE ANSWERED THAT BURUNDI DID NOT RPT NOT KNOW DETAILS OF KOREAN PROBLEM. HOWEVER, NORTH KOREA HAD MADE FRIENDS WITH BURUNDI AND HAD FURNISHED IT SUBSTANTIAL AID. SOUTH KOREA, ON OTHER HAND, HAD NEVER TRIED TO ESTABLISH DIALOGUE WITH BURUNDI AND SEEMED TO THINK EITHER THAT BURUNDI DID NOT COUNT OR THAT IT WAS ITSELF COMMUNIST AND BEYOND THE PALE.

MY NEXT QUESTION WAS WHETHER BURUNDI WOULD RECEIVE A SOUTH KOREAN EMISSARY IF ONE SUCH TRIED TO VISIT HERE. HIS RESPONSE WAS AFFIRMATIVE, AND HE OBSERVED THAT HE THOUGHT UGANDA MAINTAINED CONTACTS WITH BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH.

COMMENT: WHILE MICOMBERO MIGHT PERSONALLY BE WILLING TO TRY A LITTLE EVEN-HANDEDNESS, SOME OF HIS MINISTERS, INCLUDING PERHAPS FONMIN, WOULD BE VERY RELUCTANT TO DEVIATE FROM FULL SUPPORT OF NORTH. UNDOUBTEDLY, MOREOVER, SOUTH KOREANS WOULD HAVE TO

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COME BEARING GIFTS THAT OUTDID PAST AND PENDING NORTH KOREAN

ASSISTANCE (MASS YOUTH TRAINING, FUTURE HOE FACTORY, AND SPECIAL CEMENT SALES). BESIDES, WHATEVER MIGHT BE INITIATED, IT COULD NOT RPT NOT POSSIBLY AFFECT BURUNDI POSITION AT FORTHCOMING UNGA. NONETHELESS, IF SOUTH KOREA HAS IN FACT NOT RPT NOT, AT LEAST FOR SOME TIME, MADE OVERTURES TO BURUNDI, IT MIGHT WELL WISH TO CONSIDER THE ATTEMPT FOR LONG-TERM REASONS. CERTAINLY THE OLD ADAGE OF NOTHING RISKED, NOTHING GAINED, HOLDS TRUE IN THIS CASE.
MARK

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